JOHN BULL.

Politics without Party—Criticism without Cant;
Without Fear or Favour—Rancour or Rant.

No. 1. Saturday, May 12th, 1906. One Penny.

THE WORLD, THE FLESH, AND THE DEVIL.

The question is: "That this paper be now read a first time."

The Ayes have it.

Second Reading: This day week, Saturday, May 19th.

Who are the two Front Bench men who are in the habit of coming down to the House in an advanced stage of alcoholic stimulation?

The other day an eminent divine referred to the recent San Francisco disaster as "a most mysterious act of God." We trust the Deity appreciates the compliment. Personally, we should have been more disposed to have ascribed it to the devil!

Who was the private Member who, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer asked "What shall I do with my surplus?" murmured "'Vide, 'vide, 'vide"?

The most popular form of Democracy is that which gives us the right to fraternise, upon terms of equality, with our social superiors.

It must be very trying to a judge who has been a strong party man, and is still a keen politician, to have to sit upon an election petition. Fortunately, however, there has been no case in recent years in which the public has had any cause of complaint. What better example of this than the recent Yarmouth enquiry?

By the way, Sir William Grantham has been entitled to retire from the Bench, with his full pension, for some time past.

One great daily described Mr. Asquith's Budget as "a dazzling stroke of genius," and another as "a humdrum, commonplace, mediocre performance." We will not attempt to decide between them—but they cannot both be right; which is what the American said when, on one and the same day, he had an action brought against him for nullity of marriage, on the ground of impotence, and a summons for an affiliation order—and lost both!

Will some authority on the higher criticism enlighten us as to the occult significance of the grammatical extravagance with which the daily Prayer of the House of Commons begins. "God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and shew us the light of *His* countenance and be merciful to us, that *Thy* ways may be known upon earth"? Perhaps Mr. J. M. Robertson will oblige.

If we were asked to say who were the best parliamentarians in the House of Commons, we should unhesitatingly indicate the Irish Party. The way in which they get the last ounce out of the Rules of Procedure is an educational treat for the new Member. And if we were asked to indicate who were the truest gentlemen, we should unhesitatingly point to the Labour Party. With about two exceptions, their conduct and methods are irreproachable, whilst the manner in which they respect the internal amenities and courtesies of the House in the matter of seats and a score of other things, affords a lesson to many of the occupants of other benches.

We have been looking through a blue-book entitled "Judicial Statistics, England and Wales, for 1904"—the returns for 1905 are not yet, apparently, available. We find under the heading "Prerogative of Mercy" that during the year mentioned 24 persons received either free pardons or remissions of sentence "on account of fresh evidence establishing prisoners' innocence, or shewing reasonable doubt as to guilt, or altering the view taken as to the nature or gravity of the offence." And yet Mr. Justice Bigham does not think there is any need for a Court of Criminal Appeal. But imagine the irony of calling this "the exercise of the Prerogative of Mercy"! The only mercy shown in the matter would appear to have been towards the judges and magistrates who sentenced the prisoners, and who, in some cases at any rate, might advantageously have been asked to themselves undergo the remainder of the sentences.

The qualifying period for a judge's pension is fifteen years. During the first five he is said to be exceedingly nervous about the soundness of his decisions, during the second five he is cocksure that he is always right, and during the last five he doesn't care a straw whether he is right or wrong. Mr Justice Grantham has been on the Bench *twenty* years—so there is in his case a fourth quinquennial term to be dealt with. Will Mr. Dickens, K.C., help us to find the missing words?

From a return just issued, it appears that on the 28th March last there were, in this Christian country, 24,137 persons in prison. And here are some particulars of their declared religious "persuasions"—Church of England, 16,089; Catholics, 5,378; Jews, 257; Wesleyans, 352; Baptists 132; Presbyterians, 1,803; "*No Religion*," 26! And Dr. Macnamara and other educational authorities tell us that our present system of State Schools has worked well during the past thirty years! All the other denominations have their quota of criminals, and every prisoner is accounted for except one spiritual outcast, whose theological leanings for the moment remain in obscurity. He is simply returned as "suffering from delirium tremens." A great many religious fanatics of our acquaintance appear to be afflicted with the same complaint.

. "I'm looking about everywhere for somebody," Bert replied eagerly.
get somebody to look after your portmanteaux."

She was thankful to think that, by the time they should reach London, darkness would screen this strangely-attired traveller from observation.

"I only possess this much luggage," Bert answered, pointing to a roughly-corded canvas package near her. "If you'll help me

Remembering all this, she felt as though, with this new and troublous awakening, she could not meet him again. She wondered if she had been too hasty—if she had spoken unkindly to him, if he had expected her to

"Would you mind telling me," she said, scanning Bert's face dubiously, "if you're expecting anybody to meet you?"

Keith's unexpected declaration had confused her; his words kept recurring to her brain, and, though she was no longer near him, a wave of colour swept into her cheeks as she remembered the ardent way in which he had tried to draw her to his heart.
What was this mysterious and tempestuous love? she asked herself—this soft power which filled her with such trembling amazement? Why had she never been told of it before? Why had she been kept in ignorance of so profound and disturbing an emotion? In a child-like way she had been deeply attached to Captain Fullerton. She knew she had saved his life, and, on that account, regarded him as her own privileged property, treating him always with a sort of protective consideration.

"I've come to meet a Miss Bertreen Neil," the woman said awkwardly. "Do you happen to be her?"

"That's my name, right enough," Bert answered. "Perhaps you're my aunt?"

"I'm her maid, miss. I've been sent to meet you."
love's passion—of the thorny path it might one day create for her.

If she had seen him alone before leaving the camp for ever, he would have won from her a promise which would have filled him with contentment. Circumstances were against him. Her aunt had written to the General commanding the division, and arrangements were made for Bert's immediate departure. She was to overtake some troops that had started on the previous day, and go with them on board one of the transports by which they were to be invalided home.

Without an hour's delay, preparations were had known before. She was conscious of a vague desire to return to him—to ask him to explain all the mystery—to tell him she could never care for anyone so much as she cared for him—to say she would, at some

yet withal so loving, so considerate in the most trifling word, the most trifling act, matters with him before she had left South Africa. She would be seventeen in the space of a few weeks—when the snow would have vanished, when sun-kissed daffodils and cowslips would wave their golden bells in woodland and meadow, and earth's new-risen flowers would waken to the sylvan sounds of springtime.

He had thought, if he waited, love might blossom for him in the opening bud of her heart, and now he could never speak to her of his life's longing. She must never know the aching bitterness of the sting he had received. Mastering his feelings, he steeled himself to accept her confidence. He would not be unworthy of her trust, and if she needed counsel he would be her counsellor.

"I presume you are suited to each other?" he said, after a prolonged pause between their voices.

"That's exactly what we're not!" Bert replied, unaware of any reason for concealment of this fact. "We never meet without

In her rough tweed dress, with a crimson-banded Cape hat set rakishly on her head, and her wavy hair ruffled by her recent exertions, she did, in fact, look like the Bert of old, who, in her self-reliance and thoroughness, had marched about the tents, offering the help of her strong young hands whenever help was needed.

"When did you come? Why didn't you let me know?" she asked, breathlessly.

"It's easy to see you have not altered!" he exclaimed. "You are the same Bert of my remembrance!"
impulses, and, turning swiftly from him, tramped away over the rugged ground almost at a run.

Keith sank into his chair in an attitude of dejection. After all, had he acted honourably in speaking to her? Notwithstanding the sweet, true depths of her nature, so reliable under strong emergency, she was in many ways a child. Hitherto the love of man had remained unrevealed to her—a closed book which to her had seemed to hold only blank pages. Would it not have

"We must be more!" he whispered, trying to regain possession of her hand. "Let me teach you to love me—as I love you. Let us be the nearest and dearest to one another of all the world."

"No, no," she murmured breathlessly; "you don't seem like yourself when you talk like that—you make everything strange!"

She shrank from his touch with a shyness wholly new to her, and feeling she could not endure his gaze on her burning cheeks, she acted on one of her unconquerable by lifting up one end, we can easily carry it

"To whom?" he asked at length, his voice grown suddenly husky.

"To Sir Agnew Onslow," she answered, without lifting her head.

Keith wondered whether he had clearly understood her words. Was his bonny Bert already a plighted wife—plighted in disappointment—perhaps in sorrow? She was so young for this burden; he knew her age to a day, since she had talked over such

He walked on by her side without uttering a comment. They were both looking down at the frozen snow that crackled beneath their feet as they trod onward. He knew Bert would confide her unhappiness to him in her own simple way, and in her own time.

"I'm not at peace in my mind," she resumed, "because I've promised away my an evil shadow over a purity as transparent as crystal.

The postman's knock caused a slight diversion. There was a letter from Sir Agnew to Mrs. Collingwood, containing a message for Bert, with whom he had refrained from opening a correspondence, as he knew she disliked anything like letter-writing, when it was not absolutely a necessity, and she would probably not have sent him a reply. He remembered that at the beginning of their acquaintance she had told him her handwriting was no better than a ploughboy's, and Sir Agnew would not have been surprised to have discovered her statement to be a fact, a propensity for exaggeration not being one of her attributes.

The message which he had sent her, she heard without making any comment upon it—for her an unusual proceeding, as she was generally so ready to express her opinion. It was the first time she had thought of him since her meeting with Keith knew he was right. A vow made before God should be made to the honour of God, and faithfully adhered to through life.

Until now, she had never thought of marriage in so solemn a light. The subject had seemed so indefinite—to loom from such a remote period. Keith had brought the matter forcibly before her, and she saw it in a different aspect. She knew it would be sinning against her own soul to marry Sir Agnew; she also knew that had Keith been near her at the time she had been asked to make the promise—even had she felt sure Keith had not forgotten disagreeing, our ideas are so completely out of harmony."

"Then why——"

He was about to add: "Why have you bound yourself to him?" He checked himself, and compressed his lips, which had lost some of their colour.

With acute insight, Bert penetrated his thoughts, and answered his unfinished sentence.

"Sir Agnew doesn't consider it matters whether our ideas agree or not," she said. "He thinks when I know more of the world I shall judge life as he judges it."

Her words cut Keith to the quick.

"Bert, don't you care for the man you intend to marry?" he asked, in a strained voice.

"He didn't ask me to care!" she replied, with bluntness.

"Surely there's some love in your heart?" he exclaimed, with strange bitterness. "Some regard?"

hoping to find out something about him, but I don't think he's off the sick list yet. He must miss me very much, and often think of about him. I read your newspaper everyday

It being evident that her niece's education had been utterly neglected, the Honourable Mrs. Collingwood was relieved to think Bert was young enough to benefit by a course of private lessons, which could easily be secured for her.

"In my opinion my present garments can't be improved on," Bert replied, incorrigibly, as she marched backwards for inspection, taking no pains to moderate the thud her heavy boots made with each step. "I like to wear what is serviceable—and a patch more or less does not make much difference."

She was in irrepressibly high spirits, and her laughter rang out, clear as a bell, as, eager to explore the story above, she strode boisterously up the broad stairs, which, with their crimson carpet and polished rods, were something quite new to her. She was enraptured with the spacious bedroom to which she was conducted, and which, she was informed, had been prepared for her special use. After washing her hands with some rose-scented soap, and drying them on a towel of finest linen, she tramped downstairs, and declared herself ready for dinner.

opening of the room door disturbed her. She roused herself, and, looking up, saw a

He glanced at her keenly. It was unlike the bonny Bert of other days to seek solitude. He waited for her to speak again.

After a silence, she said:

"There is something I should like to tell you—nobody else would understand."

"What is it?" he asked, in an earnest manner that invited her confidence. He had seen a troubled expression come into her eyes.

She drew a deep breath; it was a sigh—the first he had ever heard from her lips.

"I'm dissatisfied with my life," she said. "It has got into a tangle."

"I sometimes think I prefer to ride and walk by myself," she responded "One can think of so many sweet things when one is quite alone, and surrounded by the open country."

JOHN BULL IN PARLIAMENT.

They had so much to talk about—so many stirring reminiscences of the campaign to exchange. Bert had dozens of questions to ask him, and, in her eagerness to hear every item of news, she seated herself on the stool at his feet, with her elbows on her knees, and her upturned face resting between her hands.

"It was very good of you to send for me," Bert responded; "I was so delighted when your letter came!"

"I trust I shall be able to make you happy," Mrs. Collingwood replied. "I feel sure we shall get on capitally together. I have no children of my own, so I shall consider you as my daughter."

"I was afraid—judging by the effect I had on Rhoda—that when you saw me you would want to get rid of me," Bert remarked.

"I am more than ever pleased that I sent for you," Mrs. Collingwood said. "I cannot tell you how thankful I am to have been able to trace you, and offer you a home with me. As you perhaps know," she added, with a ring of sadness in her tone, "your mother, by her marriage, cut herself off from her family. She went to South Africa with her husband, and from that time we heard nothing of her—until accounts of you appeared in the papers, and we gathered that she was dead."

took off her broad brimmed hat, with its cockade of regimental colours—now dimmed by rough service—and leaned her head against the satin cushion of the chair. Gradually she was overcome by the fatigue of her long journey. With a sort of dreamy contentment, she stretched her feet out towards the fender, and closed her eyes. She would have fallen asleep, had not the state, would create no small amount of admiration.

"You may be quite certain I am not," Mrs. Collingwood said, kissing her. "I have been looking forward to your coming, and overheard you singing yesterday, and was delighted with your voice. Come and try this song while I play the accompaniment."

Bert, whose familiar music had been the bugle-call in the field, obeyed reluctantly. She detested being, as she expressed it, perpetually put through her paces. On the other hand, she was sensible enough to realise that the tuition she had previously received did not qualify her for the position she was now to fill, and she considered it best to take advantage of the opportunities offered her for improvement.

"I want you to take a few lessons in dancing and singing," she said, going to the piano to select some suitable songs. "I am glad you have arrived safely. I am

mansion, with a portico supported by large pillars. Rhoda, grateful for the dusk which crossed her mind. It suddenly occurred to her that Marcus Neil had been one of the richest men of his community, and, unless his treasures had been looted, she might inherit his wealth.

While Bert's mind was occupied with these reflections, Rhoda seized the opportunity to have the offensive package picked up by a porter, and carried to the train by which she was to travel with Miss Neil.

Bert followed with alacrity, and, after a

IN the stillness of a South African night, beneath the roof of what had once been a prosperous farmhouse, a man, who had not reached his prime, lay dying.

While walking towards his home, in the evening darkness, he had been fired upon by a Boer, who, concealed behind some trees, had watched for this opportunity. Seeing his victim drop to the ground, he had slunk away undetected.

War between the British Imperialists and the Transvaal Republicans had not been declared; but such a proclamation seemed imminent, and the Boers were mobilising slightly wounded, and was, by this time, probably quite fit again. There were also vivid descriptions of the encounters in which Keith had taken an active part, and to which for the slight pallor of her face, showed

It was the first great grief she had known, and, close upon it, came another which brought utter desolation. Mrs. Neil, who had been suffering from a weak heart, was unable to bear up under her sorrow, and, at the end of five weeks, Bert was motherless.

Friends from neighbouring farms took compassion on her; yet, in spite of their entreaties, she would not leave her home to go to their protection. At length a good-natured woman—Mrs. Hurst—who was without ties, and glad of some occupation which would not be without benefit to herself, offered to live with Bert and manage the farm.

He followed her to the other end of the hall, where she noisily flung open a door, and he suddenly found himself in a pleasant, fire-warmed atmosphere.

splendid surprise. Captain Fullerton, this is my aunt, Mrs. Collingwood."

Mrs. Collingwood extended her hand graciously, although she was secretly dismayed at Keith's unexpected arrival at what she considered so inopportune a time. She could not help noticing the radiant look on Bert's face—the undisguised delight with which she introduced the invalided officer whose face, although lined with illness, wore so genial a smile that his deep-blue eyes at once won confidence and respect.

Bert unceremoniously took his hand, and led him into the room.

JOHN BULL IN THE CITY.

"Don't you love the snow?" she asked. "It makes everything look clean and glistening, like a new, white world."

"Of course, one appreciates it most when one gets a solid mass full in the eyes," he replied, humorously.

They commenced to traverse the road along which she had come, Keith taking an odd pleasure in tracking her previous footprints, which, somehow, he thought he would have known from a hundred.

"If you had started half-an-hour earlier you'd have had this walk by yourself," she remarked. "I made sure I should meet you on the way."

"I am selfish enough to feel glad that h personal adornment, enabled her to wear her rich habiliments with a grace that astonished as much as it pleased Mrs. Collingwood. lady in a turquoise-silk teagown coming towards her. By instinct, Bert knew this must be her mother's sister, and her gaze sought eagerly for a resemblance which she soon traced in the features of her hostess.

"So you are Bertreen," the Honourable Mrs. Collingwood remarked, as her niece rose, and went slowly forward to meet her.

"Yes," Bert answered, calmly returning the criticising gaze bent upon her; "I hope you are not disappointed in me?" Collingwood replied, with a smile.

"Not mine," Bert responded. "I know what I should like to do with the money," she added, an intent expression on her face.

"What is that?" Mrs. Collingwood inquired.

"I should like to deduct enough to live upon, and spend the rest on the poor," Bert answered—"the kind of poor we've passed in the streets, and left outside, miserable, while we've gone into the shops, buying more clothes than we wanted. I could have enjoyed choosing those beautiful things much more if I hadn't thought of those ragged people we'd passed! The cakes I've eaten at the confectioners' when we couldn't get back in time for lunch nearly stuck in my throat when I caught sight of the hungry-

"Yes, very," Mrs. Collingwood answered. "You will have a large amount of money, besides a fortune in Kimberley diamonds."

"I don't want a fortune," Bert calmly said. "I should be satisfied with enough for my everyday needs."

"One's needs may be unlimited," Mrs.

She was particularly anxious for tidings of Nurse Stanley and Major Curtis—the two who had first befriended her after she had been taken into the field-hospital at the close of that never-to-be-forgotten day.

Bert was pleased to hear that Nurse Stanley was well. Major Curtis had been occasional chattering of her teeth, and resigned herself to lie in her ice-cold bed until daylight. The clock in the next room struck six; the night blackness of the room changed to a greyish obscurity. Relieved to know the day had come, Bert closed her weary eyes . . . she fell asleep, and with that sleep warmth was diffused over her.

When Bert went down to breakfast she was dressed in her riding-habit, and, except of snow, which intensified the soft, bright colouring of her face. A lovely, unspoken tenderness lay in her eyes.

As he walked with her to the house, he placed the spade against the trellis of the porch, in the shelter of which some hardy and saw, slowly approaching, a one-horse close carriage, evidently hired from a livery-stable. The dingy brougham stopped in front of the house, and Bert, thinking there might be some stranger desirous of gaining information with regard to the locality of the road, sauntered up to the carriage window, and peered in.

What she saw inside held her dumbfounded, while she drew a few long, deep breaths; then a smile all of joyousness and sweet accord came to her face. Dropping her spade, she wrenched round the stiffened handle of the door, which, the next moment, ticular drift in hand. It was really hard work, and she dug with zest, until her cheeks were as red as holly-berries, and the drift began to rapidly diminish.

Pausing from her labour, and leaning on her spade for a brief rest, she heard the muffled sound of a horse's hoofs, and the rumble of wheels coming along the snow-covered road. She looked in the direction,

No welcome could have been sweeter to Keith, who understood her so well. Between Bert and himself there had ever been, and still existed, a perfect harmony of spirit which needed no explaining. When, lingering at each step, he had passed along the fair, glistening path she had laboured to ton—the man who had offered her his love, and had asked her to be his wife. With downcast eyes, she turned away from the scrutinising glance fixed upon her; but not before Mrs. Collingwood had detected the quick flush. At once drawing her own conclusions, further embarrassnot wishing to nad quick railway journey, was borne along the broad London roads in a hansom, with noiseless wheels and polished fittings—very unlike the roughly constructed vehicles in which she had travelled across the veldt.

She looked out at the crowded pavements with their many brightly-burning lamps—at the great shops with their shining windows of plate-glass—at the endless stream of vehicles and pedestrians; and she delighted in the changing scenes. After half-an-hour's drive, the cab drew up in front of a

JOHN BULL IN THE COURTS.

Yet if Keith could never know how dear her hurrying footsteps. He watched her as she moved among the tents, until she was out of sight. Not once had she paused to glance back at him; had she done so, she might have returned and given him a different answer.

track she had made. Bert, after meeting these cheery redbreasts once or twice, brought bread for them, and whenever one of her little roadside friends appeared she scattered crumbs; so the robins took to flying from the hedges in twos and threes, and chirruped shrilly as they pecked the broken bread.

crush down the spirit of rebellion within her. A gradual chill came over her; she grew colder and colder, until she felt as though she could never get warm again; her feet seemed petrified, and the benumbed sensation crept up all but to her head, which still throbbed heavily. She huddled herself together, and drew the eider-down covering closely over her; still she went on shivering, and thinking, in a confused way, of the decision she was to make. There was a hissing sound in her head, and her eyes ached with their long wakefulness. She Even if he had forgotten her, she could not help remembering him, with a faithfulness which could be weakened neither by silence nor estrangement.

The remembrance of Keith made the struggle more difficult. Pride had prevented her from mentioning his name at such a time. She had not heard from him since they had parted at the seat of war, and she had resolved not to appear to hanker after one by whom she might be forgotten. What assurance had she that his feelings towards her had not changed—that she had not passed altogether out of his life? He must have recovered from his wounds, and have returned to duty long ago. She had given up looking for his name in the columns of the newspapers devoted to war news. Mrs. Collingwood had more than once commented upon the eagerness with which Bert had scanned the paragraphs relating to South lover to Bert would be to drive her from him altogether, and her off-hand manner rather suited his own mood. He admired Bert and liked her—who could help liking her?—beyond that there was no deeper feeling. She would be a suitable wife to him, and he was satisfied, for he had long ago set love aside as a sentiment apart from his life, and the breach had been bridged over by worldly gratification.

"That's ambition—that's not hunger!" Bert argued, acutely discerning, as usual. "It's easy to live without the world's splendours;

Evidently, Keith had not started out, for after half-an-hour's walk she reached the "Crown," without having seen him on the way. As she halted in front of the hospitable-looking dwelling, she perceived a that morning, and the knowledge of her promise was like a heavy chain about her heart. It did not occur to her to undo what she had done—to break the fetters before they were forged eternally upon her soul. She had given her word, and, in her own trustworthy estimation, her word seemed indissoluble.

She was too impatient the next morning to didn't start sooner," he said. "A walk is so much more enjoyable when one has a pleasant companion."

Bert's face grew wistful.

"Because I happen to love you!" he replied, his voice almost a whisper. "Dear little comrade, haven't you guessed what I feel for you? How could I have you near me every day, and not love you—not want to keep you near me always?"

and she would have braved the worst if need had been.

As she commenced the difficult journey which, her friends hoped, was to ensure her safety, she looked back, regretfully, at the scene she was leaving.

"If it were not for Captain Fullerton, I shouldn't mind so much!" she thought, with a sob. "We seemed to belong to each other. How shall I ever get on without him when I'm far away?"

She shrank back, her face turned towards him with a look of half-troubled wonder. To her, the change in him was indefinable.

"Bert," he murmured, his voice vibrating with long-pent up tenderness, "I want the promise that you will be my wife, when this war is ended—if you can trust me with so sweet a promise."

He would have drawn her closer to him—would have brought her face within reach of his lips. She held herself back with involuntary resistance. Slowly drawing her hand from his, she rose and stood looking down at him as though she were in a dream—as though the ardour of his words had cast a spell over her.

Keith also stood up. His feelings had got the better of him. He saw the bewilderment in her eyes, and thinking she would red-hot iron into shape on an anvil, and loved to watch an ironsmith at his task, with the sparks flying up under his hammer, and the fire-glow all about him.

Bert's depression of spirit soon wore off. She went for long rides every day, until a heavy fall of snow blocked up the roads. Then she took to tramping out, in thick boots, with no companion but her own footprints in the silent snow, except now and then a robin that would hop along in the

JOHN BULL AT PLAY.

There were many to whom her departure was an intense relief—those to whom she had endeared herself, and who were anxious for her safety. They knew she had roused against herself the vindictive hatred of the Boers who had been led by Marcus Neil, and that were she to fall into their power her life would not be worth a minute's purchase. From the moment of her surrender, Bert had been aware of this fact; but fear for her own personal safety did not govern her, reply in a different manner. She had been taken wholly by surprise—roused suddenly to a possibility which had never before dawned upon her mind.

Why had she fled from him? He had only loved her with a greater love than she submit their lives to this cold severance. the sparring-matches which she now felt would be more violent between them.

"I shan't give in, and he won't," she thought; "so we shall always be hammering at each other with opinions that clash."

It was not a cheerful look out; still, having made her decision, she was prepared to face the consequences.

Rhoda, who had discovered what had been the purport of Sir Agnew's visit that morning, went about her duties with an extra air of importance, and her face beamed with goodwill. She seized her first opportunity to broach the subject to Bert.

"You'll be 'your ladyship' when you're married, miss," she remarked, in a flutter at the prospect; "and I do hope, miss, you'll take me on to be your maid. You'll never be able to do your hair yourself, fit for the wife of a baronet!"

Rhoda spoke in the good-natured, willing way of her class. She had not forgotten Bert's expression of undisguised ignorance freedom."

They trudged on in silence for several moments. Keith's heart was stirred with a nameless disquiet—a sharp foreboding of calamity.
await Keith's visit. Directly after breakfast she started out on foot towards the "Crown," hoping to meet him on the road. There had been a heavy frost during the night, and as she trudged along, the snow made a crisp, crunching sound under her feet—a sound which was pleasing to Bert, who loved every changing phase of Nature.

Bert's heart throbbed at his words. She

"You mustn't do that, miss—indeed you mustn't!" she exclaimed, inclined to weep in her distress. "Everybody's looking—and to think of you—an heiress—doing such a thing!"

face, as she perceived that some change in her costume was expected.

"I'm dressed well enough," she said, her old spirit of independence coming to her aid. "Why bother about my clothes?"

"I thought you would be more comfortable if you were to put on something fresher," Mrs. Collingwood suggested, in a get hold of; there's not a horse I couldn't manage if I got on his back—with or without a saddle!"

"I will get you a suitable horse and saddle," Mrs. Collingwood replied, glad to find her niece was a practised horsewoman. "Now I think I had better show you to your room, so that you can begin to dress for dinner."

A look of consternation came to Bert's carriage," Mrs. Collingwood answered, guardedly.

"They'd do all right," Bert said, with eagerness; "I could ride them in turns, before you're up in the morning—that is, if you wouldn't mind?"

"They have never had a saddle put on them," Mrs. Collingwood responded; "it would be impossible for you to mount them."

"It wouldn't be impossible for *me* to mount *any* kind of horse!" Bert asserted, remembering the breakneck rides she had survived under the training of Marcus Neil. "I've broken in some of the worst you could headstrong niece.
colouring. . . . Yet he thought he saw in her face more than the beauty of all the flower—her face, with its tender truth and loving wisdom.

"And when will you marry me, Bert?" he asked one day, as if everything had long ago been settled, although, since her freedom, the subject had not been mentioned between them.

They were wandering through a forest glen, with the scent of the verdure around them, and a carpet of moss beneath their feet.

"Whenever you like," she replied, with unwavering faith. "When you rejoin your over the moors and along the lanes bordered with verdant hedgerows. She revealed to him earth-beauties he had never before noticed; the emerald-green of the stag-moss, the tender tint of the primrose, the virgin whiteness of the lily of the valley. Every flower she gathered seemed to possess an added fragrance—an added delicacy of

Keith drew his brows together, as with sharp pain.

"It is a matter that requires more than truth to man," he responded. "There should also be truth to God. Marriage should not be only an outward form, sealed with a ring; it should be a spiritual union, pledged

JOHN BULL'S OPEN LETTER.

To His Majesty King Edward the Seventh.

August Sovereign,

In entering, with your Royal permission, upon the Fourth Estate of the Realm (now the recognised province of the press), it appears to us both dutiful and fitting that this, our first, Open Letter should be addressed to your Majesty. We write in a spirit of reverence and love; reverence, because you are the head of a mighty state—mightier than the mightiest that yet has been (for we do not believe that either in ancient Egypt or Assyria, or Babylon or Judea, or Greece or Rome, or in the moaning bed of the lost Atlantis, was there ever civilisation that could dim the glory of your empire); and love, because, although a King, you are a Man. You are of us, and with us, and ever for us. It is said by the scientists that in the after-rest of death the bones of the sleepers are as one; but it has been reserved to you, Sir, to prove that in life (whatever that may be) the soul and the blood of a king may be of the soul and the blood of his people.

With your Majesty on the throne, a Parliament is almost a redundancy. You are more of a Democrat than most of its members. When your speech was read to the Commons at the beginning of this Session, it was said by some, "The King has turned Socialist." We have always believed that at heart your Majesty is a Republican. The very embodiment of individualism, you, Sir, are always teaching us what the Man, as distinguished from the State, can do. You are our Foreign Minister—our Ambassador to all the Courts. So long as you live, European war with England is impossible. Clouds may appear on the horizon, spots on the political sun; but as soon as the spectroscope of statesmanship is applied, the personal equation always points to the King. You have already won your place in history as Edward the Peacemaker.

You love your subjects as they love you. The cottage and the hospital are as dear to your heart as the palace and the throne. The hardest worker in the land, you join in our pastimes and our sports. The cant of the bigots falls lightly on your ears—for you are King of England, the home of the free.

Indeed, one of the happiest moments of your life was undoubtedly on that historic day at Epsom, seven years ago, when your horse, Persimmon, won the Derby? We still see your beaming face, and hear the wild hurrahs of the Prince of Wales, as, discarding all restraint, he threw his hat on high and cheered your gallant steed past the winning-post. Since then, Sir, you have won a second Derby and a Grand National—thus giving the hall-mark of your approval to a great sport, and reaping a just reward and compensation for much patience and disappointment.

Claiming no monopoly of our virtues, and looking with an indulgent eye upon our weaknesses, you are essentially the man to be our King.

Sir, what you are, and all that you are, to England we shall never know till you are gone. They were critical days for the English monarchy when you came to the throne. You came, you saw, you conquered. But your task is a heavy one. In these days the security of the Crown is eternal vigilance. *L'entente cordiale* is a democratic sort of thing. It does not make for the stability of the throne; only a great personality can do that. Hence there are but two safe Crowns to-day in Europe—and your Majesty's is by far the safer of the two. Long may you live to wear it!

What shall come after you, who shall say? With this new century have been born new forces. The air is charged with them; and not less sure is their explosion than the belching of Vesuvius or the roaring earthquake of the West, when Mother Earth can no longer restrain the fury and the fire within her. All will come in its appointed day and hour. To-day you are our King—unconsciously, by your kingliness, pleading with Destiny to stay her hand. You will not appeal in vain; for we are not a revolutionary people. The revolutionist is he who would apply the forceps of Impatience to the womb of Time. We are *Evolutionists*—watching, and waiting, and working—and we want you with us.

The force of your personality is reflected in all departments of public life. Never were there so many "parties," as they are called, in the Commons. But where are the Republicans? We believe that had Bradlaugh lived he would have ceased his impeachment of your dynasty. For he was a great man. Even John Burns, the Right Honourable, proudly dons your livery, and hastens to explain that his hatred of "hereditary authority" is qualified by a loyalty to the throne. "The King—God bless him" is the toast at every banquet—and woe to him who dared to disrespect it! When, on the eve of your Coronation, you were stricken down by sickness, men looked at one another with enquiring eyes, but scarcely spoke. They were too busy, thinking. When, pale and worn, you drove through the streets, at last to claim your crown, people sighed and prayed. To-day they rejoice. They are not ready to face the problems which your life obscures—and which, may be, it will even solve.

But we must pause. Black Rod summons us to your presence. We ask your Royal assent to this our venture; and in asking it we tender, with affectionate respect, our assurance that in all things we shall be guided by undying fidelity to your person and your Empire, and all that you hold dear. God Save the King!

Your faithful Liege,
John Bull.

Our Open Letter Next Week will be to

Sir HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN,
Prime Minister.

NOTICES, Etc.

Bert went at once with the letter to Captain Fullerton. He was in a weak and bone-aching state of convalescence, and, still much be-bandaged, was sitting outside his tent, smoking a cigar, and reading some magazines and newspapers dated a month back. They were the last the post had brought from home to the seat of war, and had arrived that morning.

He did not make any response. He felt it was right that she should go—right that he should lose her sweet companionship. me—and you kinder than all the others."

ABOUT OURSELVES.

SPEAKING candidly, we do not think that, in the abstract, another journal is wanted; but, in the concrete, we are convinced that this one is. We have come not so much to supply a want as to satisfy a necessity. We start with one great advantage—we have no very decided opinions about anything. We have no politics—except the general welfare of the State; no religion—except to do good; no race—except the human one. To us *all* parties are "organised hypocrisies"; likewise, all ecclesiastical institutions—only better organised. The parson and the politician we look upon as necessary evils—the one a spiritual, and the other a temporal, policeman—and we hope for the day when the world will have no need for either. The majority of mankind we regard not, with Carlyle, as fools, but as children. There are plenty of people about—but very few individuals. We thought once of taking MAN for our title—being for manhood and vigour and independence. But in the end we hit upon JOHN BULL. We liked the ring of it; it suggested commonsense and warm blood, and no humbug. There, in a sentence, is our policy—personified in the counterfeit presentment of the mythical individual which adorns our cover.

What, then, is the scheme of our journal? First, under the comprehensive and classic heading of *The World, the Flesh and the Devil*, we shall review, from a non-party, unsectarian, human standpoint, the various events of the week and the passing topics of the hour. In these notes we shall be no respecters of persons, of place or of power. If we think a man a thief, we shall not say that he is lacking in the power of differentiation between *meum* and *tuum*. But we shall never be spiteful, or petty, or bad tempered. Nearly a hundred years ago a journal called "John Bull" was published under the auspices of Theodore Hook. What became of it we know not. Perhaps it died with its founder. We will try to be as good-natured as he was. May we come to a better end!

We shall give each week, in our own way, a synopsis of Parliament. The House of Commons is a great place, and there are remarkable people in it—some doing their country's work; some, their own, but most of them doing nothing. They are all equally interesting.

We shall keep a watchful eye upon the Law Courts, with their comedies, their farces, and their tragedies—and their judges! Whilst duly mindful of the dignity of the bench, we shall be vigilant of the liberty of the subject. Contempt of court will possess no more terror for us than the law of libel. The judges and the magistrates are public servants, and we shall help them to do their duty. A great judge—a just magistrate—approximates, in our view, to the divine, and we shall ever reverence him.

We shall deal with the City in the light of some knowledge of its intricate and devious paths. Bullion returns, discount rates, bank reserves, will not interest us any more than do the statistics of imports and exports. All such figures are partial and misleading. There was once in our acquaintance a city editor who went about one night lamenting his inability to borrow half a sovereign, although he had just written in his article that there was a glut of money in the market. Our city article will be more real.

In Sport and all branches of Play we shall endeavour to be merry and practical. We shall "cut the cackle and come to the 'osses." We shall strenuously resist all State interference with the legitimate amusements of the people. Street Betting Bills, designed on Lord Davey's lines, will receive our uncompromising opposition; but we shall warmly support any measure having for its aim the regulation and control of an institution which cannot be suppressed.

In Literature, Drama and Art we shall try to be natural. The higher criticism we shall eschew as much as the lower. The seal of nature and of art is simplicity.

When the spirit moves us, we shall address an Open Letter to some one or the other—and we already have a fair list of persons and personages to whom we are desirous of saying a few words.

And every week, in this column, we shall deal with whatever subject may be, or ought to be, uppermost in the public mind. Hence, this week we speak of ourselves!

The rest of our journal will be devoted to the treatment of current topics by competent and representative writers—upon whom alone (except in law) will rest responsibility for the views which they express.

LETTERS FROM THE OTHER WORLD.

By A. P. Sinnett,
Editor of Broad Views; *Author of* Esoteric Buddhism, Etc.

"It's no use crying," she reflected, philosophically. "I wanted to come away, and I *have* come away. I've left lots of people behind me, worse off than I am. . . . And Captain Fullerton said it was best that I should come. He'll come away, too, when the war's over, and then I shall see him again."

Bert grew quite hopeful over this last thought, and bravely conquered her tears. After all, she had something to look forward to. When the time came, how gladly shas

A sharp pain smote her heart as sh. realised all she was leaving behind her- She was beginning to understand the sweet ness of the love from which she had so tremulously turned away when first it wee breathed to her.

A swift passion of grief shook her form. It was to her as if, in this parting, the inner most joyousness of life had been wrenched out of her being, making everything around her seem desolate.

After this one brief outburst, she forced back her tears with an effort of will, and dried her eyes.

Bert did not often give way to tears, yet some very bitter ones made her eyes smart on this occasion. A sense of overwhelming loneliness chilled her, and she longed for Captain Fullerton to be near to comfort her —longed for the sympathetic clasp of his hands, for the tender words to which she had so short a time ago refused to listen.

"I didn't know how hard it would be to say good-bye, to turn away and leave him!" she thought, miserably. "In all the world I shall find no other friend like him—so kind, so dear, so true, so loved by me." her soul would be extinguished when love was cast out. For had she not said Sir Agnew had not asked for love? Then what had he demanded instead, except the sacrifice of her life's brightest light? A loveless marriage. It was like a desert-tract, watered by acrid wells, and with the pungent thorn-bush for its only fruit, a plain without balm or sound of song. Was Bert's heart to wither in such an unblessed waste? God forbid!

Little by little, in straightforward, ungarnished words, she told Keith all that had passed between herself and moor, and watched the clouds scudding over the sky, while a boisterous wind roared from the depths of the forest. It was always Keith. In storm or sunshine, in pleasure or distress, he was ever present in her mind. this scene," when she came upon some wild

"Ever so much of what?" Bert inquired, becoming interested in that which apparently concerned herself.

"Ever so much money," Rhoda replied. "You see, miss, I can't help hearing things sometimes, though I oughtn't to repea them."

Bert, whose shoulder was beginning to ache put down her burden, and stood considering for a few moments. It was the first time a thought of worldly gain had

"*What* did you call me?" Bert asked, wiping her hot brow with her sleeve.

"I never heard of that before," Bert said. "I suppose, then, if I were to marry a Field-

Bert was relieved by the answer. She had been eyeing the woman doubtfully, and had failed to trace any resemblance to her own mother's lovingly remembered face.

"I'm glad to hear you're not my aunt,"

"I said you were an heiress, miss," the maid replied, every moment becoming more distressed. "Perhaps I oughtn't to have mentioned it, but I heard you being talked about, and that your uncle had left a lot of money which you would come in for. They said you would be worth ever so much." with glorification to the Almighty."

time she grasped a double handful, and sent it thudding against the glass panes. The second summons was effective. Keith, attired in a stout walking suit, appeared at the window, which, on seeing from whom the missile had come, he immediately flung open.

She greeted him by mischievously tossing a soft snowball into his face.

"All right!" he called out, laughing and shaking off the flakes. "I shall be out in a moment. Give me time to get down."

In a few seconds he had emerged from the doorway of the "Crown." He raised his cap as he encountered her merry gaze, for the frosted snow and a sight of stream of smoke curling up from the chimney which she correctly surmised to belong to the room he was occupying."

To attract his attention, she picked up a handful of snow and threw it against the window of the room in which she believed him to be. There was no response, and this Keith's face had dispelled her troubled thoughts.

"You have stolen a march on me," he said. "I was on the point of starting off to see you, when your snowball came with a thud against the window. I hadn't an idea it had been thrown by you!"

Africa, and Bert had at last resolved not to look again, it she could not do so without causing remark. It was a subject on which she was extremely sensitive, and she had felt the colour tingle in her cheeks when she had been detected searching for tidings of

"It's in human nature to hanker after something we cannot get," Mrs. Collingwood remarked, sophistically. "Those who hunger for cakes hunger for little, compared with those whose souls crave for social power and distinction."
her wishes, which had been put forward with singular adroitness.

Bert felt terribly hard pressed. It was so much to expect of her—that she should bind herself to Sir Agnew, against whom her heart rose in continuous insurgency.

"You take things too seriously," Mrs. Collingwood said, with an amused smile. "It will not be long before you give up those ideas of philanthropy—men do not care for those sort of theories in a wife."

"What has that to do with me?" Bert asked, briskly.

"Everything," Mrs. Collingwood replied. "When you are married, your husband will want you only to think of him."

A crimson wave suffused Bert's face. Her thoughts flew swiftly to Keith Fuller-looking children outside, staring through the windows at the good things they couldn't get a taste of."

During the next few days, under the supervision of her aunt, Bert spent a delightfultime shopping—in leaving elaborate orders with Court dressmakers and fashionable tailors: the result being that, as far as dress was concerned, she underwent a complete transformation. The scarlet blouse, with its discoloured patches, was discarded. with the coarse dust coloured skirt; the hobnail boots were given to a boy who swept the nearest crossing, and she ap-
but it isn't easy to live without food!"

"I shall be only too delighted to have you with me as long as possible," Mrs. Collingwood said, in a tone of unaffected pleasure. "Sir Agnew, I am sure, will respect your wishes, and do all in his power to please you. I am extremely gratified at the course events have taken, for I consider your interests as keenly as though you were my daughter."

Bert was relieved when breakfast was at that—if he lets me take my own time about it—I'll agree to his proposal."

"My darling child, I am confident you will never regret your decision!" Mrs. Collingwood exclaimed. "I will give him your message, which I know will be for your happiness as well as for his. I should desire nothing better for your future."

"I hope it will turn out all right," Bert remarked, in her free-spoken way. "I don't wish to leave you yet, and if I'm not an encumbrance, I'd like to stay with you, as I am now, for several years."

"Yes," she replied. "It was given me by one of your gunners."

"Looks like an old friend," he responded, chrysanthemums were blooming in flower-pots. Somehow he knew Bert had arranged them there; her influence seemed to pervade everything, and he was not surprised to see on a slab in the hall some fragments of shell she had brought with her from the battle-field.

"I suppose you recognise this?" she said, touching one of the pieces.
stopping to examine it.

"I don't want to be bothered about being a 'ladyship,'" Bert replied, indifferently. "It will be bad enough when the time comes, and I'd rather not think of it."

She left Rhoda to ponder over the oddness of some young ladies, and of this one in particular.

"I don't believe she cares any more than if she was going to marry a blacksmith," Rhoda reflected, as she went round the room, straightening the silk-frilled cushions in the chairs; and that Bert did not attach the slightest importance to Sir Agnew's rank was true. She would as soon he had been for a week or two. Besides other matters which required his attention, he recollected there were entrusted to his bankers some valuable jewels, among them a ring, set with a magnificent ruby, which for many generations had been used in his family as a betrothal-ring. It had been a Royal gift to the bride of one of his ancestors, and Sir Agnew was anxious that Bert should accept it and wear it in token of her promise.

He knew that to assume the position of a when she first came ashore from the troop-ship at Southampton, and Rhoda prided herself on being able to give a few respectful hints on the rules of dress and other personal matters. She imagined her services would be invaluable to the future Lady Onslow, who, at present, was governed by headlong impulses absolutely at variance with etiquette.

"For trampling down barbed wire, for instance," Bert said, perfectly at her ease; "they've done me good service—although they gave me dreadful blisters at first." Then, as she encountered the critical gaze to which she was being subjected, she added, with her usual candour: "So, on the whole, you're pleased with me."
from South Africa: "Marcus Neil's wealth has been secured for you—you, as his next of kin, being his rightful heiress."

"Is that all?" Bert murmured, with unaffected indifference. "I thought you had some especially exciting news."

She was kneeling on the hearthrug, blowing the fire with a pair of bellows. The tidings which had just been imparted to her Collingwood responded, with a smile. "You must not let anything like that trouble you—your boots are the correct thing for the purpose for which they were intended."

She dipped the pen into the ink, smudging her fingers, then commenced to write in a bold, round hand—a style essentially her own, and which brought a smile to Keith's lips.
against his chair.

"I don't know about that," Bert responded. "She may expect somebody quite different."

"In that case, she will be agreeably surprised," he said. "She could not have pictured to herself what you are like."

Bert laughed as she glanced down at her sunburnt hands, and from them to her clumsily-protruding boots.

"No," she replied, humorously, "nobody could!"

"Without the slightest difficulty," she answered, seating herself on a camp-stool near the chair to which he had returned. "I've never written a letter to anyone—except to soldiers' mothers and sweethearts—before. How shall I begin?"

"Just how you like," he answered, opening a small metal ink-bottle for her. "I should write 'My dear Aunt,' to begin with."

Bert listened with pale face and heaving bosom, the pain of a past sorrow, the horror of a confessed crime, holding her mute.
whom she had pleaded, when, wounded and taken prisoner, he was being escorted to the British camp, every movement racking him with agony—this the man whose suffering had then wrung her heart with com- into the tent, and came back with a leather writing-case, which he handed to Bert.

"You will find everything inside," he an"C y rrkeame d.ou manage to write on your lap?"

"There's no doubt on that p>int," he responded in a low tone.

"I want you to help me answer this," she said, eagerly, taking the letter from him after he had read it through twice. "Of course, I shall be most happy to obey her instructions—I only wish I could start this very moment!"
escape for me than there was for him. If I had refused, I should have shared his fate."

"No doubt it will be advantageous to you," he replied "However, I can't say I'm delighted you're going."

"Why not?" she asked, her face, in its perplexity, lo>king bewitching. "Do you mean because you will miss me?"

"That's about it," he answered, gloomily.

"I'm very glad," she said, with a soft light in her eyes, "very glad that you will miss me."

"Isn't that a bit uncharitable?" he inquired, his gaze resting on her with a strange wistfulness.

"I don't know," she said, smiling. "I ought to have explained myself better. What I meant was—I'm glad you like me well enough to think you will notice my

She became aware of the puzzled expression on his face, and felt anxious on his account.
murmured, wondering whether she could be the instrument of some deep-rooted treachery.

"No—I belong to Britain's King, whom I serve!" she answered boldly. "I'd give my life, as readily as you'd give yours, for the honour of our nation's flag."

"Yet you personated an opposing Boer," he said, in a persistent manner.

She felt it would be difficult to reply to him in a manner that would convince him of her unwillingness to comply with his request. Accustomed to having his own way, he would hardly allow any obstacle to come between himself and what he had made up his mind to achieve. She knew him well enough to be assured on this point, and she was anxious that the subject, for the present, should be dismissed.

With her power of emotional feeling she could not be insensible to the kindness she had received from her aunt, or desire to grieve her by acting in direct opposition to

It seemed to her he had asked her a matter-of-fact question to which he expected a matter-of-fact reply, and not the faintest doubt existed in her mind as to the answer she would give him. He repeated his last words to her:

"Will you favour me by consenting?"

"Why do you bo'her me with such a question?" she exclaimed, with irritation.

"On this account—I desire an answer," he said in an unmoved voice.

"At once?" she asked, skilfully taking a curve of the road.

Bert passed a wretched night. It was usual with her to sleep soundly until dawn—the unbroken and refreshing sleep of those who enjoy perfect health of body and mind, and who devote the hours of the day to outdoor exercise. On this occasion her brain was harassed with conflicting thoughts. Lying in bed, in the dark, she tossed restlessly from side to side, her temples throbbing so abnormally that she could hear the beat of their pulse on the pillow.

"I am convinced that she will," he she was unaware that there could be anything beyond soldierly good feeling in his regard her.

"I wonder if my aunt will like me?" she remarked, as she closed the w.iting-case and fastened the straps.

"You may make your mind quite easy on that score," he answered, taking the writing-case from her, and placing it on the ground

"I meant nobody could picture anyone half so desirable," he hastened to remark.

"Do you really think my aunt will like me?" she asked, doubtfully.

This was the man she had pitied, and for

"You must not notice her manner, my her niece, she, with ready tact, changed the conversation.

"Your maid showed me the way all right," Bert said carelessly; then, as she sat down in a chair, opposite the one her aunt had taken, she added: "Are all people in London stuck-up like her? She kept asking me what I'd done with my gloves, and where she could find them. I told her I'd never had any, and then she seemed quite ashamed, as if she didn't like to be seen with me with my hands bare."

"Who do you think is here?" she exclaimed no sign of the troubled night she had Collingwoxie's eyes, and at once put that heard aclock in an adjoining room strikes KEITH did not consider his own disappointment. That he could bear. It was of Bert's regrettable position he thought most. It seemed repugnant to his fine instincts that she should callously contemplate marriage with one for whom she did not care, that in the breath and bloom of her fresh youth the subsequent years should stretch before her, grey, dull, and stagnant, like a dark pool of bitter water which could never quench her soul's thirst.

"There is no reason now why we should not fix our wedding-day," Keith remarked, taking both her hands tenderly in his own. And together they decided upon a date in the early autumn, Bert with her soft, brown eyes full of a sweet light that revealed all her soul to the man who knew her so well, and loved and reverenced her so deeply. For in the whole world who could he have found more worthy his love and reverence than Bert, with her quaint self-taught wisdom, and merry yet tender moods?

"God grant we may live long in our happiness," he said in a low, earnest voice. And she looked up at him with an answering smile, feeling sure in her heart that his wish would be realised.

to her astonished aunt, who left her seat and stood silent, as her gaze rested upon the tall, eager-looking stranger. "It's Captain Fullerton, come from the war! Isn't it a hs voice had a true-hearted tone which filled the room with pleasant sounds, especially when—as frequently occurred—his laughter mingled with Bert's.

is love, the motive-power of which is God.

Nevertheless, for some of humanity's pilgrims must sound the jangling of a dis- this time, not to vanquish a foe, but to gain a friend—one we are proud to shake hands with."

recovering from an attack of influenza, or should have gone to meet you."

During the weeks which had elapsed since her surrender, her hair had grown long enough to twist itself into little soft rings the sword.

He had never seen her look so happy. She was in such high spirits, that she took off her hat, and, waving it above her head, performed a quaint dance, which, in spite of her graceful movements, was made grotesque by her cumbersome boots with their clanking iron tips.

There was a comradeship between himself and Bert which made them disregard all formalities. From the first she had given him her confidence, and before she had recovered from her astonishment at the contents of the letter she had hastened to tell him all about it.

"Read this!" she said, tossing the letter to him in a jubilant manner.

She turned away and covered her face with her trembling hands.

agreed he should pay for his stubbornness with his life. . . Lots were cast to decide which of us should perform the deed, for we were determined if he didn't fight with us he shouldn't fight against us. The fatal number fell to me. . . That night, as he walked along the road, whistling a tune to keep himself company, I shot him from behind a tree. . . I didn't want to do it, nor did I dare to shirk; there was no more

"I've had such a delightful surprise!" she exclaimed, hurrying towards him. "I have come to tell you the good news!"

"What is it all about?" he asked, putting down his cigar.

Her face lit up with gratitude and delight. Disregarding her lameness, and the injury to her arm, she limped, as quickly as she could, to his side, and impulsively clasped his hand.

passio intit man she had now come to comfon,hrhs last extremity.

"I suppose not," she agreed, with reluctance. "However, I'm not the only girl who, equipped as a boy, has taken part in this campaign."

"Then you—belong to the Boers?" he about her head, and with her curiously

"You?" he ejaculated.

"Yes, can't you see it was?"

She got up from the camp-stool, and moved back a few paces so that he could survey her from head to foot.

"By Jove!" he muttured, with sudden comprehensiveness.

"I'm disappointed that you didn't recognise me of your own accord," she remarked frankly.

"I'm sorry," he said, "but it was hardly my fault."

"What do you mean?" he asked, in a perplexed tone.

"Haven't you guessed?" she interrogated, looking him full in the face.

"No," he answered. "I'm not good at guessing just now."

"Well then, that make-believe boy, was me!"

Instead, she had hurried away, startled and bewildered. It was the first time she had ever been made love to. Marcus Neil, after becoming her guardian, had treated her more as a boy than a girl, and he had exacted that every other man who came in contact with her should do the same. The result was, she had grown up innocent of been more consistent had he waited until she had reached maturer years? Still, there had been the thought that another might win her; for, in spite of her rough training, she possessed a spiritual loveliness that could not be ignored: it was like a nimbus to her physical strength and beauty. In these moments of meditation Bert was as ings to devote much thought to herself. The unfamiliar whirl in which she moved bewildered her, and not an hour of the day went by without rousing in her some fresh interest.

"You are to be congratulated, my dear," Mrs. Collingwood remarked to her one evening, after having received a telegram tone of kindness. "Rhoda can do your unpacking while you sit down and direct her."

Bert realised the humour of the situation, and, far from feeling embarrassed, laughed unrestrainedly.

"This is the only dress I've got," she said; "I'm so used to it that I shan't feel at home in any other. Everybody liked it in camp."

"Presumably because everybody liked the wearer with whom it was associated," Mrs. Collingwood observed, rising and leading the way into the hall. "I must at once provide you with a suitable outfit. I will write out a list to-night, and the things can be sent from the shops to-morrow morning." concluding she would upset her own schemes by opposing Bert. "It is not the customary thing to do; however, he may make allow-

KEITH had intended making his call a formal one; Bert caused it to be otherwise, and would not hear of his leaving until after luncheon. She bore in mind that he was an invalid, and, after making him sit down in the most comfortable chair the room contained, she placed a velvet covered stool for his feet.

Keith was glad of the restfulness. He was just getting back his strength; still, it took very little to tire him; and, in contrast with the biting air outside, the warmth of the fire was distinctly agreeable, and Bert's sweet attentions unutterably soothing.

Mrs. Collingwood noticed that he looked peared in the most orthodox of girlish costumes.

The unconsciousness of self, the unconcern she displayed with regard to her Bert was too absorbed in her new surround-

the photograph," Mrs. Collingwood said,

Disregarding the odd way in which Bert was dressed, she had carefully regarded her points—her oval face and delicate features; her slender, pliant figure, and golden-brown eyes. Notwithstanding her warlike costume, and the sunburn which tinged her face, throat, and hands, almost to the hue of copper, Bert's singular beauty manifested itself. Mrs. Collingwood con-

gratulated herself on possessing a niece whose appearance, even in her present crude they would produce on my carpets," Mrs. Sir Agnew. The haggard lines on Keith's face lengthened as he listened.

"And you prefer carrying such an arrangement through, to retracting your word?" he said, when she had finished.

"I'm bound in honour to carry out my agreement," she replied. "There can be, no doubt on that point."

Bert took different views of the matter, and her spirit rose buoyantly in the sudden sense of freedom which had come to her. She would tell Keith what she had done. It was about the hour for his usual morning visit. Knowing she would meet him on the road, she went forth, and walked in the direction of the "Crown."

Keith, when he heard what she had to tell him, made no remark; yet a quick light shot into his eyes, and the haggard lines which for days had furrowed his face relaxed.

have been nothing for me but sorrow and bitterness."

Mrs. Collingwood felt grieved for Sir Agnew, and wrote him a kind, little note expressing her disappointment and regret at what had taken place. She was sincerely pained that connection with him was broken off, for she both liked and admired him, and considered him in every way suited to her

"I am—very," Mrs. Collingwood replied. one lost to him. He knew it would be useless to try to follow her; in his crippled condition he could not have kept pace with she said, with cheerful candour. "I should have been very disappointed not to have found her more like my mother."

"Of course you would, miss," the woman replied, with civility. "The Honourable Mrs. Collingwood is a totally different-looking person to me."

"Why do you call her 'Honourable'?" Bert asked, comprehending the word only in its literal sense "Is she so very truthful in all she says and does?"

The maid stared at Bert with an air of polite superiority, wondering how anybody —even from the wilds of South Africa— couldbe so ignorant.

"You see, miss, your aunt married an "Honourable,'" she explained, respectfully "so she's an 'Honourable' by right."

All the same, her heart was full of Keith. He was always the last in her thoughts at night, and the first to enter her mind in the morning, and throughout the day there was scarcely an hour in which she did not think of him. "Keith would have enjoyed a ride like this," she would say to herself when she was galloping across the open country; or "Keith would have admired between us."
future date, marry him.

She shouldered her spade, and trudged through the snow, pausing at the level track she had made.

"I want to see you go along it," she said, her eyes sparkling. "I little thought yours would be the first footprints on the clean white path I was making."

She was pleased to think she had dug a path through the snow for Keith. She watched him lovingly as he went along it, going herself over the heaped-up mass at the side, with the spade still across her shoulder.

"I've dug a path just wide enough for one person to walk along, and you'll be the first to tread it!"

She delighted in trudging through the deep snow. On bleak days, her aunt sometimes advised her to stay at home by the fire, and amuse herself with a book or some fancy-work. Bert would scoff at the idea. An easy-chair covered with cushions for her! As to staying in a room with the door and window shut, pricking her fingers over some useless "art-work," she would have found more enjoyment in taking an axe into the forest and chopping down a tree.

It had been mildly hinted to her that such a proceeding would be against forest laws, so one morning she did the next best thing. She provided herself with a spade, and went out and commenced to shovel away the snow which had drifted across the garden-path, so as to almost block up the entrance from the road to the house.

An old gardener had been at work on the same job. In a peremptory manner, she ordered him to go and clear the snow away from the stables, while she took this par-
hers.
may cause you pain," he said, at length. "Marcus Neil was killed in to-day's engagement. Had his energies been devoted to our cause, we should have regretted the loss of a leader who showed such enduring courage and keen capability."

His words were the generous acknow-
twitching of his features ceased. He grew calm, like one who, complying penitently with a religious ordinance, finds peace in absolution.

"I can't expect you—to forgive me," he said slowly, "though you've shown me

CHAPTER VI

LONDON LIGHTS

would welcome Captain Fullerton—her friend of friends! She would go any distance to meet him when he reached England—like the mothers and wives and sweethearts who wrote from their homes letters that she read to the wounded soldiers. Keith Fullerton DURING the homeward passage there were so many things to interest Bert, and she was naturally of so sanguine a disposition, that the dejection she had felt at starting soon left her. It was her first experience of a sea-voyage, and she thoroughly enjoyed it. When she landed at Southampton, she looked as healthful a specimen of girlhood as any one could have wished to meet. She had devoted the greater portion of her time to the sick and wounded on board, and, on leaving the vessel, she did not part from them without a feeling of regret; for there was not one among them who would not have laid down his life for the girl who had shared their dangers so heroically.

A touch of her former boyish spirit had made for her journey, and when, with a heavy heart, she took leave of Keith, several other officers were standing near, and she could not utter a word of what was in her mind.

Between the two whose lives had become so strangely knit together there was a lingering hand-clasp—a soul-reaching gaze: and then, with a murmured "Good-bye," they parted—he with a manly resolve to face the inevitable, and trust to fate to bring them again together. She with a wild onging inl her heart to throw herself upon is breasog and to entreat him not to let —not to herth

On a bench there was a cup of water. She poured some between his parched lips, and moistened the linen on his head. The cool draught refreshed him. Administered by her—the girl who had suffered through his crime—it seemed like a sacrament. He felt its tranquillising effect, and the convulsing whom she now came in contact. Keith especially she treated with a confidence which was wholly new to him, her manner being marked by an utter absence of all that was conventional. It seemed perfectly natural for her to go to him whenever she needed advice—to accept his services in the same spirit in which she offered him hers;

"God will be merciful and forgive you," she answered, her voice very low.

"And you?" he gasped faintly.

"If you're at the ball, you'll see me," she

His voice—broken, almost inarticulate—roused her.

"Water!" he moaned. "My brain's on fire! Give me—water!"

Bert knelt down and folded her hands together on the edge of his cot, as she had always folded them when repeating the

"If you do not care to dance, we will sit out," he said, remembering her whimsical remark about the "humming-top." "As a rule, I prefer to look on."

Bert, whose pulses were already beating to the time of the music, had no dot "sit out."

"I've got the waltz all right," she replied, her voice loud enough for everybody near to hear what she was saying. "I practised in the

Another thing that put her patience to the test was being photographed. Notwithstanding the restlessness of the sitter some satisfactory results in metalline were obtained, one in gold being peculiarly lifelike. The artist had done justice to the lovely girlish face, with its half-tender, half-defiant expression, and had never produced a picture more perfect in every detail. He begged to be allowed to exhibit it in one of the art galleries; but his request was not granted, as Bert herself objected to her photograph being publicly displayed.

"I should like to send one to Captain Fullerton," she remarked. "I wonder whether he would recognise me so differently dressed."

It was the first time she had mentioned Keith's name since arriving in her new home, and the hesitation in her tone caused Mrs. Collingwood to look at her suspiciously.

"Who is Captain Fullerton?" she asked.

"He's one of the officers who got wounded the day I went over to the British lines," she replied, the colour rising in her cheeks.

With a last, compassionate look at the lifeless man, Bert went slowly away to resume her task of watching by Captain Fullerton. Her nerves had been thoroughly shaken by the scene through which she had recently passed, and, overcome by a sense of profound depression, she sat leaning forward on the camp-stool, with her hands pressed over her eyes. She felt stiff and dazed when at length Captain Fullerton roused her by asking her if she could give him something which might serve as a pillow to prop himself up with. She

While under the control of Marcus Neil she had been thrown so much among men to whom chivalry was unknown, and had led such a boyish life, that she never realised the charm her personality had for those with

"I am afraid that is not possible," he replied, watching her curiously. "However, we may as well get the answer off. I'll fetch some paper and ink."

Leaning heavily on a stick, he limped To him her presence in the camp had been like a ray of sunshine, and even when he saw her in her most light-hearted moods, he could never forget her acts of courage—of almost sublime mercy, which had ennobled her in his sight.

As she felt how utterly her life was now cut off from his, the glory left her face, and a sort of dumb sadness crept through her soul.

Was it a fact that he could no longer care for her?—that she could never more have any part in his life? He had loved her; yet, in her ignorance, and with that untamed spirit still alert in her, she had rejected his devotion. She had not understood—not until, in the swift pain of separation, the truth had come surging home to her.

Had she obeyed her inclination, she would have written to him weeks ago; but Mrs. Collingwood had impressed on Bert's mind the utter want of conventionality such an act would have betrayed to him, and, not wishing to forfeit his esteem—even though she might never meet him again—she refrained from communicating with him.

Now and then a faint hope had stirred in her breast that he would send a message to her. Mrs. Collingwood had assured her he would have done so had he been the faithful friend Bert had believed him to be.

frock, designed for the baby-sister of the boy who swept the crossing in front of the house. The boy in question had been specially attentive to Bert on muddy days, and it was gratifying to her to see that his sockless feet were protected by the thick-soled ammunition-boots she herself had worn. Once or twice she had noticed his tiny sister toddling in tattered clothes by his side, and Bert thought it would be easy to supply the poor mite with garments which would protect it from the cold and damp.

Having cut out the frock, Bert set to work at it with zest. She was not particular about the seams being straight or the stitches promptly utilised a folded coat for this purpose, and then relieved her feelings by confiding to him all she had gone through in connection with the dead prisoner.

She understood, and answered solemnly, "I couldn't ask God to forgive you if I hadn't first forgiven you myself."

Her words soothed him. He closed his eyes, and his brow, although furrowed still with acute bodily pain, lost its wild look of spiritual unrest.

After a few moments, he again looked at her pure, young face, that, in its expression of meek pardon, seemed to this man of crime to be glorified into something celestial. He saw her dimly as a far-off vision—simple prayers learned in her childhood.

pity."

absence when I've gone away."

that Bert was unaware that his heart had ceased to beat until informed of the fact by Nurse Stanley, who had quietly approached the cot.

Printed by WERTHEIMER, LEA & Co., 46-47, London Wall, and Clifton House, Worship Street, London, E.C.